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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Washington Post (Glenn Kessler, "N. KOREA OFFERS EVIDENCE TO REBUT URANIUM CLAIMS", Washington, 2007/11/10) reported that the DPRK is providing evidence to the United States aimed at proving that it never intended to produce highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons, ROK and U.S. officials said. The DPRK government has granted U.S. experts access to equipment and documents to make its case, in preparation for declaring the extent of its nuclear activities before the end of the year. "They have shown us some things, and we are working it through," a senior U.S. official said on the condition of anonymity. "Some explanations make sense; some are a bit of a stretch."

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2. DPRK-Vietnam Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL 'ACCEPTS INVITATION TO VIETNAM'", 2007/11/11) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il told the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nong Duc Manh, who was on a visit to Pyongyang in mid-October, that he wants to visit Hanoi next year, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported Saturday. Kyodo quoted a senior Vietnamese official as saying that Kim will go via the trans-Chinese railway. "North Korean officials asked us to keep everything, including Chairman Kim's itinerary, secret if his visit to Vietnam materializes at all, and to announce his visit only after his departure for Vietnam," he added.

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3. US-ROK Free Trade Agreement

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREANS CLASH OVER US TRADE DEAL", Seoul, 2007/11/11) reported that tens of thousands of ROK farmers and workers clashed with riot police Sunday at a massive rally against a free trade agreement with the United States. Police said they arrested some 100 protesters and that more than 10 riot police were hurt. Organizers said some 50 demonstrators were hurt, mostly suffering head injuries.

Chosun Ilbo ("RATIFICATION OF KOREA-U.S. FTA UNLIKELY THIS YEAR", Seoul, 2007/11/12) reported that United New Democratic Party presidential candidate Chung Dong-young on Saturday

said it is unlikely the current regular session of the National Assembly will ratify the ROK-U.S. free trade agreement. Grand National Party (GNP) spokeswoman Na Kyung-won said it will be impossible for the ongoing regular session to deal with the FTA since various supplementary measures need to be devised and it will take time to persuade lawmakers who oppose the trade pact. This was the case even though GNP presidential candidate Lee Myung-bak "is strongly in favor of the trade treaty and is determined to ratify it."

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4. ROK Presidential Election

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "2 PARTIES MERGE FOR SINGLE CANDIDATE", Seoul, 2007/11/12) reported that the United New Democratic Party (UNDP) and the minor opposition Democratic Party have agreed to merge and pick a unified candidate to stand against conservative candidates in the race. Chung Dong-young, the pro-government party candidate and former unification minister, is favored to become the unified party's standard-bearer over Rhee In-je of the DP, sources said.

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun, "PARK THROWS WEIGHT BEHIND GNP CANDIDATE", Seoul, 2007/11/12) reported that Park Geun-hye, former Grand National Party chairwoman, on Monday offered her support to the party's candidate Lee Myung-bak. "I remain unchanged in my view that the party must win the election, and I will do my best to help," Park told reporters. She added "it is not right for Lee Hoi-chang to compete again."

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5. Tumen River Development Project

Vladivostok Times ("VLADIVOSTOCK WILL BECOME PLACE OF HOLDING EXTENDED TUMANGAN INITIATIVE", Vladivostok, 2007/11/11) reported that delegations of five countries - Russia, the PRC, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Mongolia - plan to participate in an expanded Tumen River Initiative to be held in Vladivostok on November 15-16. The delegates will discuss issues of realization of new investment projects on territory development, creating an Expanded Tumangan Initiative trust-fund, the budget for 2008 and some other issues.

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6. Ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin

Associated Press (Burt Herman, "EXILED KOREANS RETURN AFTER 60 YEARS", Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, 2007/11/10) reported that the last group of Koreans from Sakhalin Island are returning to the ROK under a three-year repatriation program funded by the ROK and Japan. Only Koreans born before World War II ended in August 1945 are eligible for relocation and financial support.

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7. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "JAPAN DIET COMMITTEE OKS NEWNAVAL BILL", Tokyo, 2007/11/12) reported that a Japanese parliamentary committee on Monday approved renewing a limited version of a naval mission in the Indian Ocean. The bill, which is expected to be voted on in the full lower house on Tuesday, limits Japanese ships to refueling and supplying water to ships used in the monitoring and inspection of vessels suspected of links to terrorism or arms smuggling.

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8. US-Japan Security Alliance

Yomiuri Shimbun (Aya Igarashi, "GATES AGAINST HOST-NATION SUPPORT CUTS", Washington, 2007/11/10) reported that U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates on Friday expressed his opposition for the first time to the Japanese government's plan to cut host-nation support for U.S. military forces stationed in Japan in the next fiscal year. Gates also asked for an increase in Japan's defense budget.

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9. PRC Separatist Movements

Associated Press ("CHINA SENTENCES 5 TO DEATH IN XINJIANG", Beijing, 2007/11/11) reported that Xinhua News Agency said that the PRC has sentenced to death five ethnic Muslims from the Xinjiang who were accused of separatist activities. A sixth man was sentenced to life in prison by the Intermediate Court in Kashgar on Friday. Xinhua said the six were convicted of charges ranging from illegally making explosives to leading a terrorist organization.

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10. Taiwan WHO Membership

Korea Times (Kim Se-jeong, "TAIWAN PURSUES WHO MEMBERSHIP DESPITE OBJECTION", 2007/11/11) reported that Wu Shuh-min, president of the Foundation of Medical Professionals Alliance in Taiwan, and three other members of the foundation arrived in the ROK for a one-day trip last Monday to solicit support from the ROK and other countries for Taiwan membership in the World Health Organization (WHO). "I hope countries including Korea acknowledge the serious ramifications that Taiwan's exclusion from the WHO could bring about, and I urge them to speak up against China," Wu said.

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II. Republic of Korea

11. DPRK Nuclear Threat

Donga Ilbo (Yoon Sang-ho, "DPRK HAS ABILITY TO MAKE A NUCLEAR ATTACK AGAINST ROK IN AN EMERGENCY", Seoul, 2007/11/09) reported that Korea Institute for Defense Analysis claimed that the ROK Army should move to neutralize the DPRK's nuclear arsenal with superior military force, preparing against the DPRK's ability to use their nuclear weapons to attack the ROK's field army or military facilities. "Although the real ability to use a nuclear weapon is low, the DPRK will use it to reduce the US military deterrent, keeping the nuclear umbrella and conventional military force as a nuclear threat", said KIDA researchers in the "2007 Analysis and Assessment of National Defense Budget and 2008 Outlook."

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12. US Sanctions on DPRK

Nocut News ("DPRK WILL BE REMOVED FROM TERRORISM SPONSOR LIST", Seoul, 2007/11/11 17:15:00 GMT+0) reported that it is quite clear that the DPRK will be removed from the terrorism sponsor list as the DPRK's denuclearization process is ongoing. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Song Min-soon came back from a visit to the U.S. and said he has re-confirmed that the U.S. will observe the agreement. Thus, it is becoming a question of when the elimination from the list of terrorism sponsor and release from the US Trading with the Enemy Act will be done.

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13. DPRK on ROK Election

Yonhap ("DPRK'S MEDIA CRITICIZE 'A POLITICAL TRAGICOMEDY'", Seoul, 2007/11/11 17:40:00 GMT+0) reported that the DPRK media is criticizing former leader of the Grand National Party Lee Hoi-chang's announcement on running for the presidency. The DPRK weekly magazine Tongil Shinbo pointed at Lee's two-time failure to be elected as evidence of his "unchanging ambition" and said "it is a political tragicomedy." A cabinet organ, Democratic Chosun and Pyongyang newspaper also reportedly criticized Lee, but the details are unknown.

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